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66th Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars to save the date for the 66th Annual Meeting. Due to COVID-19 this year's meeting will be held as a virtual meeting. The date is Thursday, September 17th at 6:00 PM. As the date gets closer, we will send out information for you to register. We are sad we can't see you all in person, but will look forward to seeing you online. We are hopeful that next year we will be back in person.

Lowest Loan Rates

We have your best interest in mind and want to help you meet your financial goals and make your dreams come true. We did just that last month for one member and we know we could help so many more of you. A member reached out to us to refinance a loan he had and we lowered his interest rate by 21%! If we can do that for one member, we know we can do that for so many more. We urge you to contact us and see how we can help you get more for your hard-earned money. Our rates are the lowest around (we will match rates too!). We understand the trades and you can apply online or over the phone – it is Fast and Easy. Take the step today and call!

Contactless Banking

There are so many new terms that have emerged and we have had to make a lot of changes on how we access everything we need to live since March of 2020. Contactless Banking = mobile and online, social distancing = 6 ft apart, required to wear a mask = protecting others, and so on. Let's face it there are new rules everyday and a new norm. Here is how you can navigate your finances with the lobby closed;

- Download the IBEW and United Workers mobile app (for Apple & Android)
- Get on your desktop and login to It'sMe24/7 Online Banking
- If you are a new user you can set up your login for either without calling the credit union, you can even reset your password on your own – it is that easy!
- Apply for a loan or VISA credit card online
- Once you are in sign up for e-Statements, this will save you \$2 a month and it gives you peace of mind that your statement isn't sitting in your mail box while you are at work.
- Sign up for e-Alerts and e-Notices – let's save a tree and you will get notified a lot quicker. This helps you stay up-to-date on your finance and could save you time and money.
- Once you are logged in and set up explore around there is so much you can do;
 - Deposit a check with Mobile Deposit
 - Account to Account transfers (one financial institution to another)
 - Manage your debit or VISA credit cards with alerts you set up
- The list goes on and on.....and remember if you need assistance we are always a phone call away to help.

Holiday Closures

September 7 Labor Day

October 12 Columbus Day

What is the 2K Rule?

How the 2K Rule can help pay for your child's college education

For many parents, saving for a child's college education is a major source of stress. It's often difficult, if not impossible, to know how much you actually need to save, as the cost of attending college varies wildly depending on the college and whether your child qualifies for financial aid. Without knowing what college your child will attend, how can you know how much money to put aside?

Furthermore, even if you do know what college your child will attend, the cost of attending is likely to change by the time your child is old enough to go. Besides, when should you start saving? The 2K Rule is an attempt at answering all of these questions.

What is the 2K Rule?

Invented by Fidelity Investments, the 2K Rule is a rule of thumb designed to help parents estimate how much money they should save to help pay for their child's college education. It says that you should be saving \$2,000 a year towards a college education every year. If you're just starting out, simply multiply your child's age by \$2,000 to see how much money you need to catch up and afford half of the cost of an average college education. After that, you should continue setting aside \$2,000 per year until your child goes to college.

For example, if you have a 10-year-old child, you should strive to have \$20,000, or \$2,000 times 10 years, already set aside, with \$16,000 still left to save over the course of the next eight years. Essentially, under this system, you would aim to build a \$36,000 college fund for your child.

According to Keith Bernhardt, vice president of retirement and college products of Fidelity, this would allow you to be "reasonably confident" of affording approximately half the cost of a four-year education at an in-state public university. Fidelity came up with the 2K Rule after a company survey discovered that over two-thirds of parents wished there were more specific guidelines on how much to set aside for their child's college education. "Different people have different financial goals, but the 2K rule provides a starting point," Bernhardt says.

You must use a 529 plan

The main caveat of the 2K Rule is that it assumes you are using a 529 plan. This is a state-sponsored, tax-advantaged plan that can help increase your college savings. States offer a variety of different 529 plans that come with a number of benefits, the first of which is that investment earnings in a 529 plan are not subject to federal capital gains tax when used for qualified education expenses. According to the IRS, these expenses include college tuition, fees, books and other necessary supplies.

Additionally, thirty-three states and the District of Columbia will not tax investment earnings in a 529 plan, and five states will even offer an income tax deduction to residents for their contributions in the plan (these are Arizona, Kansas, Missouri, Montana and Pennsylvania).

However, finding the right 529 plan for you and your child can be tricky. There are two main types of 529 college savings plans: direct-sold plans and advisor-sold plans, though other types of plans also exist whose potential benefits you may wish to explore. According to a 2016 survey, almost three-quarters of investors did not know what a 529 plan is.

If you are part of that majority, and you are looking to maximize your tax breaks and set up your child for college success, make sure to talk with an investment advisor at your local financial institution. They'll help you determine the best 529 plan and how much money to set aside for your child's education.



Dividend Basics

A simple guide to a cornerstone of investment

When you dive into the world of investing, there are countless terms that you need to understand. One of the most common is the dividend. If you're considering investing some money in a company, it's important to know what a dividend is, how it works and what it means for you.

What is a dividend?

Unlike many financial terms, dividends are fairly basic and don't take much work to understand. According to Investopedia's James Chen, dividends are the amount of a company's profits that you earn as a shareholder. When you invest in a publicly-traded company by purchasing a number of shares, you technically own a part of the business. That means when the company makes money, you get a portion of those earnings, or a dividend.

How do dividends work?

As we stated, a dividend is a sum of money given to you by a company you've invested in based on the number of shares you own. Chen says that this payout traditionally comes in one of two forms: as cash or as additional stock in the company. Thankfully, calculating how much money or how many more shares you're owed is pretty simple. U.S. News contributor Coryanne Hicks states that a company should tell you what percentage of your stock they'll pay on when you invest. For instance, if you own 100 shares and the company pays out 10 cents per share, your dividend will be \$10. Using the same numbers, if you choose to reinvest that sum, you won't receive the \$10, but you will now have 110 shares.

It's also important to know that your dividend will depend heavily on the type of stocks you purchase. Hicks says that many companies offer common shares, preferred shares and bonds. As a bondholder, you have more sway with the business, and you'll be paid before — and possibly more than — the other types of investors. Moving down the ladder, there are preferred shares and common stocks. There's also something called a "special dividend," which Hicks defines as a one-time bonus payment that you get in addition to your normal dividend if the company had a successful few months or is restructuring. Of course, as with all investing, there's no guarantee that you'll receive a payment at all.

What do dividends mean for you?

Now that you know the basics, it's time to look at the tangible benefits of investing in dividend-paying stocks. According to Coryanne Hicks, purchasing stocks can have an incredibly positive long-term outcome, whether you're just starting your professional life or preparing for retirement. If you're young, she suggests that reinvesting your dividends gives you the opportunity to build your portfolio and compound your profits. If you're ready to leave the workforce, you can schedule regular payments and essentially live off of the money you invested years ago.

The Balance's Thomas Kenny also says that dividend-paying stocks — while less predictable than fixed-interest options — can pay out far more. Compared to accounts at financial institutions or government-issued bonds, dividends can yield anywhere from 1.5 to five percent, making them an ideal option if you're looking to maximize your income.

Investing in dividend-paying stocks is a great way to diversify your portfolio and build financial security for the future. For advice on how to buy shares in a company — and how to tell which options are favorable — speak with your trusted financial advisor.



6 Backyard Camping Tips

How to camp in your backyard like a pro

You don't have to venture far from home to enjoy the outdoors with your family. Pitching a tent in the backyard is a great alternative to build memories with your children while practicing social distancing. Here are six simple steps to pull off a successful backyard camping experience.

Pick the tent's location

One of the great things about backyard camping is its convenience. Set up the campsite and tents close to the house. That way, it's just a short walk away if you or your kids need to use the bathroom or fetch an item that you forgot to bring outside.

Have the children set up the camping area

Help cultivate your kids' love for the outdoors and knowledge of pitching a tent when you let them set up the campsite. Supervise their efforts to ensure their safety, but let them do the work when it comes to putting the tent poles together, hammering in the ground stakes and laying out the bedding.

Go with the right pit

A backyard fire pit is a great alternative to a campsite bonfire. Just make sure to check your neighborhood's fire code to make sure that fire pits are permitted. Even if you live in the suburbs and have strict homeowner's association rules, you can still enjoy the glow of the flames via a raised fire pit that you can purchase from a local home improvement store.

Opt for unplugged activities

Leave electronics inside so you and your children can have some unplugged fun for a more authentic camping experience. Tell ghost stories, play some yard games like bocce balls or Spikeball and catch fireflies. Backyard camping is also a great opportunity to learn more about the stars. Consider buying a telescope so you and your family can scan the sky for constellations. You could also hide small objects around the yard when it grows dark and let kids find them with flashlights. Award prizes to those who find the objects.

Whip up some camp-friendly recipes

If you'll be cooking dinner over the fire pit, find a recipe or two to try that goes beyond roasted hot dogs (unless you really like hot dogs). Make some delicious tin foil dinner recipes like cilantro lime shrimp, salsa verde chicken and rice, grilled pizza bread and campfire potatoes. For dessert, experiment with s'more varieties by swapping out graham crackers for Oreos or chocolate chip cookies. Or try unconventional fillings like bacon, berries and dulce de leche.

Make sure your after-hours lighting is kid-friendly

Though two-mantle propane lanterns are a common flashlight alternative for adult campers, these can be dangerous for young ones. Instead, go with more child-safe lighting options like headlamps and either solar- or battery-powered lanterns.

By implementing these six suggestions, you're well on your way to giving your family a delightful night under the stars without traveling too far from the back door.



Social Media Tips for Parents

Tips to help your child safely engage in social media

Social media offers an opportunity to connect and share with others, but it can also expose your child to bullying, negativity and potentially dangerous individuals. The following tips will help your child safely navigate the world of social media and capitalize on its benefits.

Screen time limits

Social media at its core is designed to entertain, connect and engage users. That's why time seems to lose all meaning when your kids are tweeting, reading, clicking and sharing. Hours can go by in what feels like a blink of an eye. To help safeguard your children's time and encourage them to foster other interests, limit their screen time. "Unstructured and offline play stimulates creativity. Make unplugged playtime a daily priority, especially for very young children," recommends the American Academy of Pediatrics on its blog HealthyChildren.org.

Security tips

Appearances can be deceiving on social media, and it's important that your kids understand that just like in the real world, not everyone can be trusted. Remind them that connecting with someone they don't know is not a safe idea. A friend request from a stranger should never be accepted and sharing pictures can be problematic, as some apps reveal to users where the photos have been taken. Remind your child to not share identifiable information such as their full name, birthdate, location or name of their school that an online predator can use to their advantage. Make sure you help your kids set the appropriate privacy settings on each of their social media accounts.



Latest apps and sites

It seems that every other second there is a new, hot social media app. With the rapidity of change, it's hard to keep up with what apps are safe for your kids to use. Keep the line of communication between you and your children open. Ask about what apps they're using and research them on your own. If your kids want to try a new app, tell them you need to investigate it first before they can sign up.

Forever rule

Anything your kids post will last forever in cyberspace. Even if they think they erase it or take it down, their words, comments or pictures never truly go away. What they post now can live to haunt them for years to come. Potential employers, school boards, friends and family, along with anyone else using the internet can find and judge their content.

Monitoring tips

Your kids may refuse your friend request or block you from their posts because they don't want their social media activity monitored or they don't want to let their friends see that you're looking over their shoulder. You might feel hesitant to invade their privacy, but it's important that you are keeping an eye on them. "As long as they are minors, I believe it's wise for parents or guardians to check their children's social media posts," according to Psychology Today writer Tim Elmore. Apps such as DinnerTime, Norton and TeenSafe will help you keep tabs on your kids' online activity and set limits.

Social media is a complicated outlet with many pros and cons. These tips can help your child understand how to protect themselves online and use social media to enhance their life instead of adding more stress to their development.

